

**ON
TRACK
OFF
ROAD**

58





Marco Simoncelli

1987 - 2011

Photo by Monster Energy/Milagro

MotoGP





MotoGP

Golden coasting...

The fruits of a phenomenally successful 2011 were bunched together for Casey Stoner at Phillip Island two weeks ago as the expectant father celebrated his 26th birthday, fifth win in a row at the venue and of course his second MotoGP World Championship. In terms of career victories, with 39 in all classes (125, 250 and MotoGP) Stoner is now the 10th most successful GP racer of all-time

Photos by Honda Pro Images





**MX**

Million Dollar Man...

As Stoner cemented his credential as the world's fastest man on tarmac Ryan Villopoto was establishing the same level of distinction on the other side of the globe and under the Sam Boyd Stadium lights for the inaugural Monster Energy Cup. The 23 year old walked away with the million dollar bonus after sweeping all three ten lap races and completing a CV that included AMA Supercross and Motocross titles as well as the Motocross of Nations

Photos by Simon Cudby







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MotoGP

**SHELL ADVANCE MALAYSIAN
SEPANG · OCTOBER 23rd**

MotoGP winner: Race cancelled

Moto2 winner: Thomas Luthi, Suter

125cc winner: Maverick Viñales, Aprilia

DARKEST DAY

Photos by Monster Energy/Milagro, www.yamahamotogp.com,
Honda Pro Images, Ducati Corse Press



MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX



Farewell Marco...gone far too soon



The hot weekend started ominously with the failure of marshals to indicate a wet corner in practice on Friday and both Marc Marquez and Bradley Smith were ruled out of the Grand Prix in the ensuing chaos. For the Spaniard - not given the all-clear to compete by medical staff - it was a cruel way to see his valiant

charge for the Moto2 crown and back-to-back titles effectively come to an end. Maverick Viñales would go on to pick up his third 125cc win on his first visit to Sepang and Thomas Luthi would earn spoils in Moto2 for the first time.



The MotoGP race, with three Repsol Hondas on the front row and no factory Yamaha's for the second meeting in succession, lasted less than two laps when Marco Simoncelli lost the front end out of Turn 11, tried to save the crash and ran straight into the path of Colin Edwards and Valentino Rossi. Less than an hour after

the accident and after going into cardiac arrest due to the severity of head and neck injuries the Italian was lost.

2011 will be remembered for Stoner's emphatic return to Honda but it will also be marked by this desperately sad conclusion. Valencia next merely becomes a process to be completed.



Spies tried...but was not fit to race in Sepang after his concussion in Australia. Somehow this photo seems to reveal the mood of the Grand Prix however



Setup & Qualifying Practice

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H.I.T.



Luthi grabs his first...and walks the podium in Sepang for the first time since 2005. This was a big ride from Bradl who doesn't even need to finish in the top ten (if Marquez wins) to be champion in Valencia

THE CHANGING MAN...

By Gavin Emmett

Writing in the past tense about the vivacious Marco Simoncelli is a tough assignment. Putting off the inevitable task ahead, I've spent hours since Sunday's catastrophic race bouncing from one website to another gazing at photos and stories about the popular Italian. I then began flicking through past interviews I had done with him, re-reading words I'd written years ago, and even listening to a couple of old recordings that somehow, thankfully, had escaped deletion. You tend to do that. Ask yourself questions. Find a few answers.

An over-riding sensation came through for me, quite apart from one of being lucky enough to get to know a genuinely lovely man rather well, and that was one of Marco Simoncelli being a pretty contradictory character.

Here was a ballsy motorcycle racer who could be meek and really rather shy in his early days in the championship. It took time for his career to really take hold, but on track he grabbed opportunities on track by the scruff of the neck. He was extremely polite and thoughtful, but by the same token there was not much messing around where Marco was concerned; if he saw the door to an overtaking manoeuvre slightly ajar, he would barge through it without a second thought.

Quirky, gawkish, gangly, awkward, a little different to the norm, yet at the same time as cool as fuck. His shaggy hair became his motif and caused a snigger amongst some, but anyone who saw the brilliant spread of photos he posed for in Italy's Riders' magazine dressed in a range of 60s and 70s outfits would love it instantly. He showed he was able to take himself not so seriously.

I'm not sure if there is a rider out on track in the World Championships whose character

off the track is so reflected by his personality on it. Whilst he was immensely entertaining, there were also times you'd watch him through the cracks of your fingers. Simoncelli took the criticisms he received from other riders on the chin, in a "racing-is-a-hard-business" kind of way. That's why the fans took to him, he was from the old school, a flawed hero. It's what we all loved. He had a career we were all looking forward to seeing flourish in the most engaging fashion.

Already tall for a 125 when he made his GP debut back in 2002, by rights he should never have won races on the tiny single-cylinder machines, but took his first GP win in the wet at Jerez in 2004 before repeating the win a year later.

He didn't seek the limelight at all, but he was shot into it with his 250cc World Championship. He embraced it, became a national icon and his humility meant he was loved across the board.

Motorcycle racing itself is a sport of contradictory extremes; the high speeds contrast with the sheer braking forces, the huge advances in safety technology cannot eliminate the inherent risks and dangers, the irreplaceable human element must combine seamlessly with technical expertise, the responsibility of the individual cannot function without the crucial role of the team, the buzzing highs of victory and, more pertinently at this moment, the lows.

Simoncelli will be missed in all his clumsy glory, he was a pleasure to watch, to talk to and to be around. The outpouring of emotion from his Italian peers and his bitter rivals demonstrate that while he was many different things to different people, there was and will only ever be one SuperSic. Ciao Marco. #58.



SOME WORDS FROM SOMEWHERE...

By Adam Wheeler

After the Monster Energy Cup I had the misfortune to travel to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway and arrived in the immediate aftermath of the accident in which Briton Dan Wheldon perished. The atmosphere was stunted and heavy, as you would expect it to be. Although not a follower of Indycar it was still a very tangible and sad experience. The fact that this English driver, a double winner of the Indy 500, had died in such a violent way and left behind such a young family was deeply affecting.

The news of Marco Simoncelli's passing was almost too shocking to digest. I can only imagine how people were trying to deal with the situation in the stifling heat of Sepang.

In just his second year of MotoGP and seven days after his best result – a second position at Philip Island – here was arguably the category's most colourful and controversial character snuffed out at the age of 24. As Indycar carries a threat so starkly visible with the banks and fences of the ovals so the watching world was vividly reminded that motorcycle racing can be a vicious discipline. MotoGP couldn't arrive to a decade without a fatality in the premier class after Daijro Kato was lost at Suzuka and his home Grand Prix in 2003.

Like Wheldon, Simoncelli's circumstances at Sepang were something completely out of his control and involved other competitors. A motorcycle racer's worse fears are being hit by a spiralling bike or from the following pack. The last two riders to sadly lose their lives on the track, Shoya Tomizawa and Craig Jones in World Supersport, were both struck by pursuers.

It is not part of the sport that can be remedied, improved or removed.

One of the big issues now will be how this affects MotoGP. Obviously the final round of the season at Valencia next week will be a sombre affair with many members of the paddock

community either unmotivated to get back on the track or wishing to cull the worst possible finale to a campaign as quickly as possible. With 2012 testing scheduled for the Monday after the race, the fixture in Valencia is about more than the closing round of eighteen for the MotoGP crew.

It is hard to guess, or even imagine, the mindset of two riders involved in the Sepang accident, Colin Edwards and Valentino Rossi. As followers of the sport will know Edwards was going to continue to compete in 2012 as part of the BMW CRT effort and through his many years in the sport has seen the dark aspect of racing up close when his Yamaha World Superbike team-mate Yasutomo Nagai was killed after his machine landed on him at Assen in 1995. For Rossi Sepang is arguably more pivotal, and more devastating. At 31 years of age and a distinction as one of the very best seen on two wheels, '46' has endured his worse term ever in MotoGP and his role in the accident where it was the former champion who seemed to catch his good friend's helmet as he slid across the asphalt means that it would be understandable if Rossi never wanted to zip up his leathers again.

It goes without saying that the family, friends, team, sponsors, partners and Honda will all be vastly affected by this and can team boss and owner Fausto Gresini cope with another tragedy after losing Kato while the talented Japanese was under his stewardship? For the sport on the whole Marco was a high-profile emblem of the exciting possibilities of MotoGP and it would have been fantastic to see what he could have done on the bigger 1000cc machinery in 2012.

It will be tough for everybody connected with the series to gain some perspective in the coming weeks and months. You can only wish and hope that these horrid and unwanted reminders of motorsport's perils don't happen too often.



CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 17 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Casey Stoner	325
2	Jorge Lorenzo	260
3	Andrea Dovizioso	212
4	Dani Pedrosa	208
5	Ben Spies	156



Moto2 RESULT

Riders		
1	Thomas Luthi, SUI	Suter
2	Stefan Bradl, GER	Kalex
3	Pol Espargaro, SPA	FTR
4	Alex de Angelis, RSM	Motobi
5	Dominique Aegerter, SUI	Suter

125cc RESULT

Riders		
1	Maverick Viñales, SPA	Aprilia
2	Sandro Cortese, GER	Aprilia
3	Johann Zarco, FRA	Derbi
4	Hector Faubel, SPA	Aprilia
5	Nico Terol, SPA	Aprilia

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 16 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Stefan Bradl	274
2	Marc Marquez	251
3	Andrea Iannone	172
4	Alex De Angelis	170
5	Thomas Luthi	151

125cc CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 16 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Nico Terol	282
2	Johann Zarco	262
3	Sandro Cortese	225
4	Maverick Viñales	223
5	Hector Faubel	161



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Clement Desalle

Team Rockstar Energy

Suzuki World MX1

PH: Ray Archer

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MAKING THE MESSAGE

THE ROLE OF A PRESS OFFICER IN MotoGP

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Milagro

You seldom see or hear from a MotoGP star in this day and age unless an interview or time slot has not been arranged with the team, sponsor or manufacturer. Deciding where someone like Valentino Rossi, Casey Stoner or Jorge Lorenzo must go and who to speak to falls into the job descriptions of a few select people. **Gavin Matheson** is coming to the end of his first season as Press Officer for the Yamaha MotoGP team with Lorenzo and Ben Spies, and spent several years learning the trade in World Superbike (where he oversaw the clamour that surrounded Spies' championship year in 2009). The Englishman, now living in Amsterdam with partner Flora and young son Rocco, is a valuable 'cog' in the factory team's existence and their responsibilities as soon as the kill switches on the M1s are hit. Here is why...

Your job title is fairly explanatory but what are the key duties you perform for the team/brand/riders?

GM: In a nutshell I'm the key contact between the media and the team and riders. Any queries regarding team activities and any requests for interviews from print, online and TV media come through me and are assessed before being approved or turned down. If approved then it's my responsibility to oversee the interviews. During a race weekend I'll also draw up and manage all the riders activities off the track. Attending media events and promotional activities. These can be anything from trout fishing in Phillip Island with Ben, Casey and Colin Edwards. I'm not saying the Aussies are biased but Casey got special bait! If either rider has to attend an event as an ambassador for Yamaha then I may be the one



to trail with them as well, for example I went with Ben and Jorge to a huge one-day Yamaha event in Bangkok at Christmas last year, over ten thousand people were there to see them! I'm also responsible for all written communications from the team for the media and fans. Following Jorge's crash and subsequent hand injury in Phillip Island it was my responsibility to make sure the media and fans got timely updates on his surgery progress and recovery. I'll draft all relevant press releases to send out, any news on rider contracts, team changes, new sponsors and all post qualifying and race reports will be drafted by me. Social media is increasingly a large part of my role. At the time of writing we have nearly fifteen thousand followers on twitter and a growing number of Facebook followers. I tweet all weekend from the race track which is actually a really enjoyable part of the job. We have a lot of fun interacting with the other team twitters, especially arch rivals HRC. The fans seem to really enjoy a bit of banter! I'm also part of

the team that created and delivered Yamaha's amazing 'flashmob' event in Barcelona, that was one of the highlights of my job, seeing Jorge appear out of nowhere to pitstop on his M1 outside the Sagrada Familia!

How is it dealing with Jorge? It must be complicated looking after the demands surrounding a world champion...

GM: Actually it's not at all. Jorge has a personal PR manager, Hector, who is rarely away from Jorge's side and ensures he is on time for everything and doesn't miss any appointments. Working closely with him is easy, Jorge is pretty happy to do most activities so it's just a case of filtering the media requests to ensure we cover the most important and relevant first.

Lorenzo seems quite proactive with his image; is he OK with all the press work?

GM: In general yes, I've never met a rider who really loves the PR side of the business but I have to say he's pretty professional about it



and understands the importance of putting on a smile and being there. He's probably the most savvy rider I know with social media and has a huge following on twitter, nearly three hundred thousand last time I checked.

Have there been any sticky moments?

GM: Not necessarily sticky moments, but Jorge is incredibly honest and never sugarcoats his answers to the media, he always speaks his mind. For a PR man that can sometimes be a little uncomfortable as we always have the brand at the back of our mind. Japan is a case in point where he, like some other riders was very forthcoming from the start with his opinion. We would never try to stop him from speaking out but it does sometimes make more work for us!

What is the genuine ass-ache to your role?

GM: One of the biggest ass-aches for me is how my role is viewed by the riders. I have a very good relationship with both Ben and Jorge and also with all the riders I've worked with in the past, Haga, Corser, Crutchlow, Toseland etc. The problem is PR activities are the least enjoyable thing on their schedules over a race weekend, they would much prefer to be riding. So when they see me, they know it's time to smile and shake hands. As a result Jorge's nickname for me is 'pain-in-the-ass' a label Ben seems to have adopted for me as well! I take it as a compliment that I'm doing my job properly...

Ben seems a little more reserved. Is the media side of his role a bit more laborious for him do you think?

GM: As said before, no rider really loves to do the media stuff, Ben would definitely be happy if we could skip it all. There's a misconception that he's not happy because he doesn't smile a lot at the track. When he arrives at a circuit he's all business and concentration, he doesn't have a slick PR face to slip on. In truth he's a pretty happy laidback guy, it's always a bit of a shock the first time you get the full Spies smile. He's always been good to work with though. He's never late for an appointment and always answers media questions intelligently.

Do you find riders are doing more media work than ever? Are the demands/interest increasing? Or does it depend on the territory of a race?

GM: It definitely depends on territory to a certain extent. Jorge will obviously do a lot more in Spain and Ben a lot more in the US. In general the demands are increasing. As racing becomes more and more commercial alongside the recent years of financial crisis brands and manufacturers look to get the most possible value out of every opportunity. At the end of the day I do believe a rider's job is not just to ride, it's also to be an ambassador for the sport so I think they have a duty to the manufacturer, the sponsors and to the fans to get out there be involved.



Do you have to be selective about who speaks to whom? Can a hack just grab a rider around the paddock or is it more regimented than that?

GM: We do have to be selective. It would be impossible to meet all media requests so a decision has to be made on the relevance. In different territories we try to ensure local and national media have a chance to get one-on-one with the riders but we also have to ensure that the media that travel around the world to follow MotoGP get what they need. Approaching riders in the paddock directly is a no-go.

How is the level of MotoGP compared to WSB with regards to your job?

GM: It's a bit more organized in MotoGP, you tend to be reacting more to media requests as opposed to proactively finding media stories. The style of media reporting is also pretty different. In WSB the overall media focus was a lot more technical and concentrated on riding,

team development etc. This is obviously still present in MotoGP but there's a much greater interest in gossip and lifestyle of the riders. The media can be quite provocative in chasing inflammatory comments from riders to make a good story!

Is it a bit hard to read comments about how MotoGP has gone so corporate and that journos cannot get access without going thru a wall of PR people?? What's your view on that state of that side of the sport?

GM: I don't think that's true at all. Every rider will have media debriefs over a race weekend where all accredited journalists are welcome to come and ask questions directly. The Dorna Press conferences are also open to all accredited media to ask questions both during and after the conference. A rider can't be expected to spend all weekend giving interviews, especially as a lot of the questions can be repetitive. I think in general the status quo is good.





SX-MX

MONSTER ENERGY CUP

LAS VEGAS, SAM BOYD STADIUM · OCTOBER 15TH

Winner: Ryan Villopoto, Kawasaki

Freestyle winner: Mark Monea with 'Carry on 360 Front Flip'

Super Mini 85cc: Adam Cianciarulo, Kawasaki

Amateur All-Star: Justin Hill, Kawasaki



SHOWTIME

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Simon Cudby and Steve Cox



'One heck of a show'. The two full spectator enclosures of the Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas were constantly reminded by both the enthusiastic commentary team and numerous elements around them that the inaugural Monster Energy Cup was a belter of a way to end the off-road racing campaign.

After the lights, fireworks and the unveiling of a drawn-out supercross track that was an exemplary example of how to brand and showcase a one-off racing spectacle...Ryan Villopoto gunned his Monster Energy Kawasaki to three decent starts and an undisputed overall victory to pick up the 'Monster Million' cash box that had been suspended above the start gate. Namesake and '11 nemesis Ryan Dungey completed a decent debut on the factory KTM by placing second ahead of Australian Brett Metcalfe on the Rockstar Suzuki.

Justin Hill (amateur), Adam Cianciarulo (junior) and Mark Monea (40k for the best freestyle trick) were also winners as the 'MEC' kicked-off life as the high-profile end of year event that will undoubtedly see some presence from Europe in 2012 with its date of October 20th already confirmed. Over the following pages OTOR spoke to some of the names and faces spotted in the hot Vegas paddock...

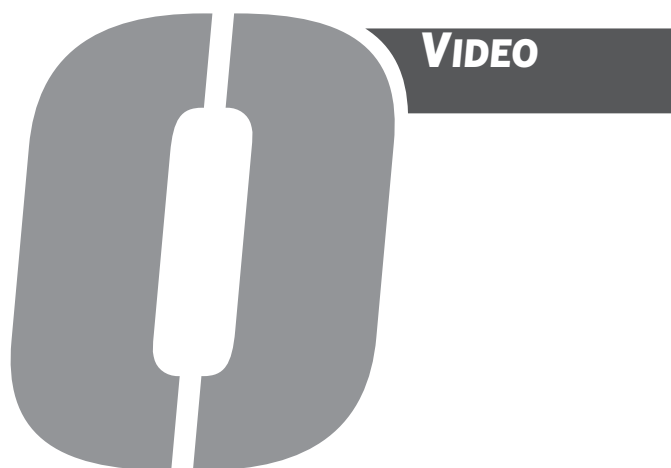


There had obviously been a degree of arm-twisting for Villopoto to have postponed his honeymoon to appear in Vegas. It worked out being worthwhile for all concerned





The Townley-Dungey duel was arguably the action highlight of the night and partially proved two things...one that Ben Townley is not yet a spent force on the AMA stage and two that KTM's dry spell in American supercross arenas looks closer than ever to reaching an end





RICKY CARMICHAEL

THE GOAT. SAY NO MORE...

Carmichael took time out from his NAS-CAR commitments to attend the Monster Energy Cup and look over the track he had co-designed with fellow Supercross legend Jeremy McGrath...

Ricky you are still racing but is the slower pace of life what you expected after retiring from motocross and supercross?

RC: Now I'm retired I seem to be travelling more! All the things I didn't have to do when I was racing motocross and supercross have come full circle and I have to get out there. I keep my role as factory Suzuki team advisor, my deal with Monster and staying in the TV booth and commentating on a few supercross' here and there. We have my Ricky Carmichael Amateur Supercross at Daytona every year and the University. So things like that fill my plans and that's what I look forward to doing.

How do you find the media work and the fact that people seem to appreciate you even more now than when you were racing?

RC: It is pretty easy really. It's a piece of cake and continuing the legacy of what I worked for and all those wins and championships. You never know what you've got until it's gone and it's nice to be appreciated, man. I always went out there to do the best I could do and thankfully it worked out.

We're here at the Monster Energy Cup. Would you have done this event when you were racing or can you sympathise with people like Villopoto, Canard and Dungey and their relentless schedule?

RC: Good question and I think looking back I can speak from personal experience in that

I should have done more events and special races like this. When you are caught up in the moment though it is easy to turn them away. I see the riders' position because the season is long but at the same time you have to do events like this because it builds your brand and makes your position that much better when you are in spot like I am now. We need an event like this and it will be good for a lot of years to come. The fact that it is for a million dollars will bring a lot of outside publicity. Right now I don't think these guys fully understand but in the future it will be good for them.

What's your view on the track you helped create?

RC: I'm watching right now as I'm talking with you and I think this is a track that is easy to comprehend. It has some nice jumps and is not too busy. It has some nice 'eye candy'.

Could the AMA Supercross series benefit from being like this, being simpler?

RC: Yeah, I have always said that supercross tracks need to be at the point where everybody can do the same thing and the guys can focus on racing and not be scared. The best guy is always going to win but they need to make it better for the others. You want parity in any series.

In a theoretical world could you have been out there doing this race?

RC: I think I could theoretically get out there and do pretty good because it is not that technical. It would be fun but when you're retired, it's over. It is a mental thing. I would love to go out there but I made my decision and won't go back on it...





BEN TOWNLEY

COMING BACK...

Still only 26, Ben Townley entered the **Monster Energy Cup with a Pro Circuit motorcycle** (he won the **East Coast Lites Supercross title** for them in 2007) to prove he still has the goods. The highlight was an excellent second place in the first main event in what was his first major meeting for almost five months.

Do you think the million dollar bonus will really be a factor for riders to enter the Cup?

BT: Yeah, but for a lot of those top guys....it is hard to say. Ryan Villopoto has won everything this year and it is intriguing to see how much it will matter to him and others on a similar level. My biggest reason to be here is to get back out there again and this is a big stage. This is a platform for me to kick off the next step of my career.

What's your take on the event?

BT: I think it is a great concept and it will be interesting to see how it goes. Maybe there could even be one in Europe and one in America and make a double-header. It creates a bit of an equaliser and there is not so much on the line in terms of a championship or anything like that. Obviously there is money there but it will be limited as to who can win that.

Can you see the Europeans being up for it?

BT: Definitely some of the top guys for sure. I think the intensity could be a factor 'against' for them because it is very similar to U.S. Supercross but in terms of the track, obstacles and layout it is not death defying by any means. I've come off the couch to do this, in that I haven't raced at this level for a long time, but I really enjoyed it.

How about the significance of a huge cash prize in this current day and age?

BT: Monster has come a long way in the last few years and have really established themselves as a powerful company. The amount of press and

attention this race is going to gain is a tool for them to keep growing further. It is a rough time for a lot of people for sure but what Monster is doing is bringing more attention to the sport.

It seems that Energy drinks have really saved the day when it comes to certain motorsports and action sports...

BT: Years ago it was cigarettes and now its energy drinks. I joke with people that I need to try and guess what the next thing will be to get ahead of the game and make my millions! It is great in a few ways because it helps sustain the sport and builds up rivalries with the teams and elevates profiles of the riders. There isn't really a bad thing about it.

What's the next move for you?

BT: I'm not in a position to demand what I want to do. It looks like I might be racing in the States or Australia. I just want to do something properly. I had the set-up with CLS with the people, their experience, the equipment and the whole package was really good. That was a big thing for me but the circumstances with the concussion and broken jaw is what I put it [the withdrawal from GPs] down to. I lost form and when I started to build myself back into racing I missed confidence. To say I was scared is perhaps the wrong word but I wasn't ready to be racing. I needed time to mentally recover my confidence and I have done that with some months at my place and with people helping me physically and mentally.

Can you understand if some people might be thinking 'call it a day BT, you've achieved enough...'?

BT: Yeah, definitely and it has gone through my mind as well. That was part of the process for me when I was at home...to see if I could go on and do something else but, no, I couldn't. I feel like I still have something to achieve. People can have their opinion and it doesn't worry me one bit.

ROGER DE COSTER

THE MAN, IN ORANGE...

Team Manager of the U.S. factory Red Bull KTM squad, Roger De Coster was admittedly a surprise visitor to the Monster Energy Cup but was able to oversee an encouraging debut by Ryan Dungey and some decent speed from Marvin Musquin on the 350SX-F...

Roger what is your view on the Monster Energy Cup and it's purpose?

RDC: It is a one-off event so you can use it for whatever, for us it is perfect for Marvin to get another race under his belt. I was scheduled just to come here with him but in the second week of testing Ryan said he really wanted to race this weekend and see where he is at and give an idea of how much we have left to do. I was a little bit surprised but I thought if he is confident enough to go out there, without any pressure from us, then maybe he feels pretty good about the bike and it is a good sign.

So Ryan is already content with the new 450SX-F?

RDC: We had a good start and I expected it would have been harder to get him happy. That doesn't mean we are 'done' there is still work to do.

With your previous working relationship and the KTM factory backing was it straightforward getting him onboard?

RDC: In Europe there is no question that KTM has been dominant for the last couple of years and a lot of riders in the paddock do well on

KTM machinery but the fact remains that they have never won a race in the U.S. in the main class, indoor or outdoor. When a top rider wants to switch brands he is going to look at something like that and 'put on the brakes'. Our relationship from the last couple of years helped but I believe he trusts in what our team is doing.

What do you think about the open rule regulation for the Monster Energy Cup? Will this see some interesting stuff in years ahead?

RDC: I think it is good for an event like this and it makes it a little bit more attractive for the factories if you want to try something new. Racing is always a little bit different to testing. The riders put a bit more stress on the bike or maybe they are not as sensitive as they are in tests. We saw that with Ricky Carmichael in '05. We came to the U.S. Open, which was then at the MGM, and it was his first race on the Suzuki. We had a problem with the clutch, which was something we had never seen even though we had made several weeks of tests and had no hint of trouble.

Do you think we will see more Europeans coming over in future editions, especially with U.S. Grand Prix now on ice?

RDC: To come from Europe is very expensive and if you want to do it right you need to bring your own equipment and mechanics. You might get some but I don't see the potential for the top ten guys coming out.





MITCH PAYTON

EMPEROR OF THE AMA...

Renowned tuner, motivator and dominator of the AMA scene Mitch Payton fielded three riders (Josh Hansen, Ben Townley and Broc Tickle) in the Monster Energy Cup. He is spreading his influence with an alleged 450 team-in-the-making for the 2012 AMA campaign and support for two CLS Kawasaki squads in the FIM Motocross World Championship. The Pourcel brothers will run Pro Circuit machinery in the '12 MX1 series. Here he chats about the MEC and also the French project...

What's your opinion on the Monster Energy Cup and do you think we'll see a more eclectic line-up in seasons to come?

MP: I wasn't really sure how it was going to go together but from what I have seen and from talking to the guys involved it seems really cool. There is no reason why the Europeans couldn't come, I mean Ben Townley is here and he wanted to do it for fun and we said we'd help him. The whoops, which is usually the scary part of the track for those guys, are not here and the speed is higher than a normal supercross track. To me it is like an X Games track on steroids.

What about the potential of the open rulebook for this event and the chance for Pro Circuit to throw in some new stuff?

MP: It is possible. You could throw something out there but this event is the end of the season. It isn't really an opportunity for us right now. We just got back from the Nations and our focus is on getting through this last race and start on tests for our 2012 models. We are so busy now that we don't have the luxury of having a different test crew that could set something up for this one event. It is a one-hit wonder and it is an opportunity for people to test, I think this is the case especially for KTM, and this is great. To me the Monster Energy Cup is more about the money. It is a big purse for the riders, the biggest they get to race for

all year, and for that alone I applaud them [Monster Energy/Feld] for doing it.

How do you feel about the FIM World Championship project?

MP: I am very happy with the results but I want to do better, I want the world championship. One of the big key players is having Harry Nolte there looking after our parts and making sure they go together and are worked properly. The 'Christophe thing' was a little weird this year but it was fantastic the way he filled in when Ben Townley couldn't go on. I like Christophe and I get along with him. I believe in his abilities. I've seen his brother have some fantastic rides in the past, so, why not?

How's your working relationship with Christophe?

MP: Christophe is like a talented musician or a racehorse. They are finicky. A racehorse will run brilliantly one day and the next we won't want to go. Christophe is very finicky and I got the best results out of him by making him happy. Yes, sometimes it is all about him but at the end of the day it is all about winning, so I am OK with that. As long as he is happy and he gets the results then I am happy.

Can it be hard with that high maintenance approach? Especially after all the riders you've had in the team and under your control through the years?

MP: What is high maintenance? You know... Ricky Carmichael, Dungey or Villopoto there are high maintenance things about all those guys. Christophe probably gets a bad rep because he is 'French', so you are already looking or expecting something odd. To me Christophe is a kid, a person. He is not 'French'. He is a person and to me he is not weird, he just wanted to do his thing. He would train and ride and if he got the results then we wouldn't have a problem.





POURCEL OUT OF BERCY AS SX RACES CLOSE '11

The final acts of 2011 will involve start-gates dropping in stadiums around Europe with decent entry lists at Geneva (2-3rd of December with Mike Alessi, Justin Brayton, Tommy Searle, Arnaud Tonus), Genoa (19th November with Chad Reed, Justin Barcia) and of course Paris Bercy (this weekend October 28, 29 and 30). The event in the French capital is always

a busy one and the tight track that partially loops out of the stadium will see the likes of 2010 'King' Barcia, Gautier Paulin, Kevin Windham, Eli Tomac, Searle and Brayton involved. Sadly Christophe Pourcel was forced to withdraw from a potentially triumphant 'homecoming' for the French team after a smash while practicing for the three night meeting.



Bercy (Archer image)

RUSSIA MAKES GRAND PRIX RETURN FOR '12

The first visit to Russia for the FIM Motocross World Championship took place in 2002 for what was the last round of the series. The Park Extreme venue gained praise from the riders but the empty-quarry setting (the removed soil was actually used to construct an adjacent ski slope) left sour memories with little infrastructure in place and the team encountering numerous difficulties crossing the border and through checkpoints to compete.

The race will always be remembered for Mickael Maschio securing the last 125cc title in what was a three way dice between Steve Ramon and Philippe Dupasquier. It was the first time ever that France had world champions in two categories in the same year (Mickael Pichon was 250cc number one). Joel Smets slowed to allow Javier Garcia Vico to become the first Spanish Grand Prix winner in the history of the sport and thus

allow the popular racer to be third in the 500cc World Championship standings.

With factory Honda World Motocross team's Evgeny Bobryshev becoming the first Russian to own a GP in 31 years when he clinched the German Grand Prix in July the sport has gained an increase of following and now the chance to return east has materialised.

Semigorje, some 400 kilometres from Moscow and on the banks of the Volga, will be the host and ensures the latest version of the Grand Prix calendar – due any time now – will stay at sixteen events. The trip to Russia will likely begin a three-race stretch with Sweden and Latvia involved.

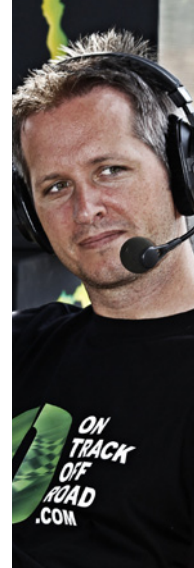
Little is known about Semigorje but www.mx-pure.com managed to dig up some interesting info



Evgeny Bobryshev (Archer image)

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LOOKING LONG TERM...

By Adam Wheeler

I've had a couple of messages asking if this publication would stop now that racing campaigns have either finished or are coming to an end. This is not the case.

The original goal when we first started out with OTOR was to use some cool imagery to complement the thoughts and words of people right at the heart of the three motorcycle disciplines we highlight. The idea was to try and fill that little hole (in terms of layout and content) between the functionality of a website and the increasing impracticality of a printed magazine. We're still waiting for technology to catch-up and for affordable online publishing platforms to provide a comprehensive template. Calameo is extremely easy to use and also soft on the wallet, something pretty important for a fledgling project but it does have its limitations, as does Issuu, which is crippled by not being able to embed video and also poor support for Apple products. There are a fair few of those around these days. Regardless we hope that you might have found some aspect of OTOR that has appealed.

On November 6th MotoGP will close with the final round of eighteen at Valencia in Spain. After the issue on the 8th there are only three more OTOR editions pencilled in before the whole process begins again with Anaheim 1 and the opening meeting of the AMA SX series on January 7th. MotoGP testing will commence quicker than we realise and there will be increased interest in this for 2012 with the 1000cc capacity coming into play and Moto3 (and all those 250cc-four-strokes) meaning a lot of new machinery on the asphalt.

So while you'll still be able to read the opinions of our contributors when the paddocks have been cleared and the grandstands have been swept at the end of the calendar year there will hardly be much down-time before it cranks up again. We'll do our best to throw some features in the mix and make the visit to www.ontrack-offroad.com still a fun and informative part of being a motorcycle sport fan.

It is at this juncture that I ask for regular readers out there to throw me any comments or suggestions for the future at info@otormag.com. Going weekly is a major ask at the moment but something that is on the horizon while expanded coverage of MotoGP to focus on Moto2 and 3 is another theme that is closer to being realised.

I am also reasonably optimistic of getting some Trial and Enduro content involved at some stage as well as diversifying with some product and bike tests that will keep the same honest and informal style of presentation. There is a bottomless field of quite superb video clips out there online so whether it's BMX, mountain-bike, extreme sports or anything else eye-catching it is a worthwhile pulling together a hub of 'essential viewing' with every new issue.

This was scribbled before racing got underway in Malaysia and the shocking event of that day. Any motorsport fatality is hard to accept because it seems such a waste. For Marco Simoncelli, at 24 years of age and on the cusp of something great in MotoGP, it is even more emotionally jarring. RIP...

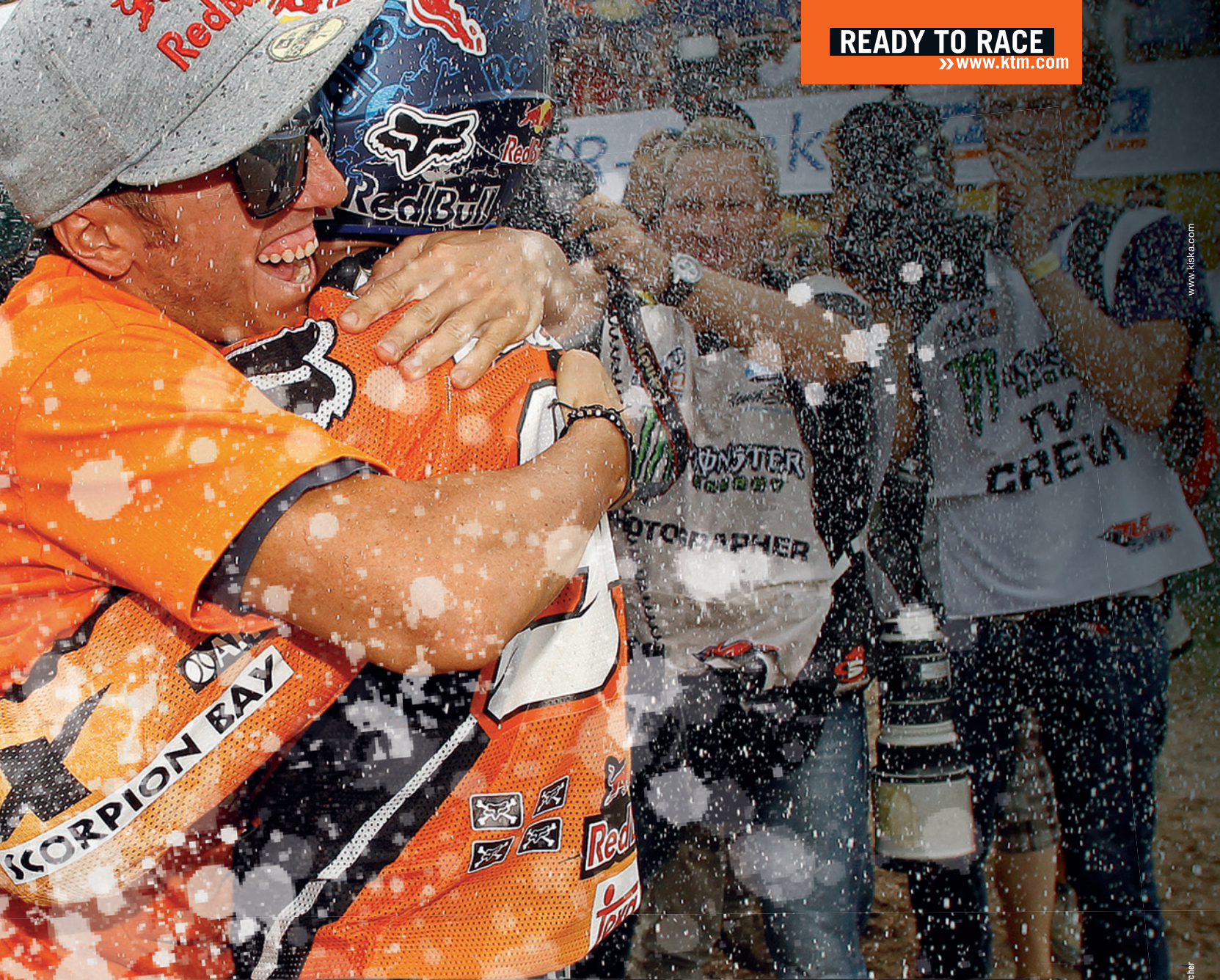


THIS IS HOW CHAMPIONS

KEN ROCZEN & TONY CAIROLI, 2011

One dominates the MX2 class in his debut year with KTM and wins his first world championship title with the KTM 250 SX-F. The other continues the success story of the KTM 350 SX-F in the MX1 class and celebrates his second world championship title with this unique bike. Ken Roczen and Tony Cairoli – victory at the double!

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Ryan
Villopoto



RYAN VILLOPOTO

RYAN VILLOPOTO

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Simon Cudby

It is unlikely that Ryan Villopoto will ever better 2011. It has been nothing less than a monumental campaign for the 23 year old from Washington who won both AMA Motocross and Supercross championships, the Motocross of Nations and the first Monster Energy Cup, earning a million dollars for one evening's work. To cap it off 'RV' married his girlfriend Kristen before heading to Las Vegas...

You must have had many questions about this year but have you had time to really digest what you have done?

RV: We've already moved on! We are now at the Monster Cup and after the Motocross of Nations I started to ride Supercross again and get back into things. I haven't had any time off so come Tuesday we will be escaping for our vacation/honeymoon. It's only ten days and then we will be right back going for 2012. Of course I haven't forgotten about what I have won but there is a tendency to immediately think and plan ahead so you don't reflect too

much. They say you are only as good as your last race and if 2012 doesn't go like it has this year then they will forget about 2011. In a way it is already forgotten about.

If I were to retire tomorrow then I would be able to say that I had supercross and outdoor championships in the 450 class so from here-on-out it is just about how many more I can get before I stop. My focus is not to beat anyone's record or something like that, it doesn't really interest me. I will just go on as long as I can and want to.



Is there a moment that stands out when you were really enjoying yourself this year?

RV: Not really...mainly because this year was so tough in both series, many riders could have won them. Supercross is tough because everybody is right there and anyone can win at any time. The season felt long and hard and then I came into the outdoors not really where I needed to be and I was playing catch-up all year.

Do you in any way have the sensation that you have reached a peak of your career?

RV: It will be hard to have a year like I had this time. '11 is over, it's gone. We are already talking of the countdown to 2012. All I can hope for is a similar season. I'm gonna put in the work and the time, but that doesn't mean it will go my way. I think backing-up what you did the previous year will show that you are the best at that particular time in the sport.

Five times world champion Tony Cairoli says he finds the motivation in having fun and beating whoever is ahead of him on the day. Can you understand or relate to that now having won everything?

RV: Yeah, but generally it is harder for us though. The guys that race the GPs have a decent-sized off-season. I sort of see where he is coming from because they get that downtime. They can think in 'seasons' whereas it is a 'year' for us. We had supercross, outdoors, this race and I get a ten-day vacation before it starts again and the supercross begins on January 7th. We don't have to get on a plane every weekend but the year doesn't stop for riding and training.

Is racing still fun?

RV: Right now? It is still fun but also a job, for sure. It is more of a job than fun...there are fun days and fun times.

It seems like you have earned your money this year...

RV: Yeah, it's hard, and I think every person that races supercross and motocross is underpaid for what we do.

Is the current scheduling too much?

RV: I think so yeah. I think manufacturers and people need to get together. I don't have the solution off the top of my head right now but there has to be a way to slow it right down and give us, and everybody on the teams, an off-season. We need time to have a break, recover and look forward to the next season.

Are there any other challenges you have now? Perhaps winning it with a different brand or trying the World Championship?

RV: I think it would be fun to go out there and try it [the FIM World Championship] for a few rounds but it's hard. When the GP guys come over here I don't think they do as well as they do over there. Maybe it would be the same for me and it would be hard to adjust. I know from the Motocross of Nations that it is hard for us to figure things out. The tracks are a lot different. A track is a track but the soil seems to be very different and I think it is harder for us to go there than for them to come here for this. I think it would be fun in Europe...not many friends! I don't see myself going over there.

What part seems more 'pure' to you? SX or MX? Which part would you give up if you had to?

RV: I don't know. I missed the Outdoors the last two years and finished it this season and it was a lot harder than I remembered. It would be hard to pick just one but I think I would keep doing supercross. It is just a little easier. There are more races but you don't have to do little things like battle one hundred and five degree heat.

What about the criticism that people like James Stewart, Chad Reed and Kevin Windham have had for picking a series? Do people understand...

RV: ...People don't understand that's the problem. I totally understand...we just wanna break and I don't think those guys would chose just one series if it wasn't so long.

How does it feel to be married and do something with your life away from a motorcycle that is memorable?

RV: My family got me into racing a long time ago. My grandpa still rides even now. It started as fun and I got to be pretty good and we did some racing. It took-off from there but I look at it now like it is my job and it is not what I live for. I am now one step closer to having kids and a family; that's what I am really looking forward to. I was talking to Stefan Everts at the Nations and he said to me that he thought racing was his life and then he had his son Liam and realised that it was just a very small part. I said 'I don't have kids yet but that's how I look at it already'. I am here doing my job

and I love it. It makes me good money and I'll be able to retire. I'm not going to take that for granted but I know racing is just racing.

Perhaps the question should not be about how many championships but how many kids?

RV: [smiles] Not yet obviously but I can see two kids further down the road. Right now we are happy and everything is good.

There must have been a bit more tension before that last race as you were so close to the million...

RV: Yeah, I guess the last one was the most nerve-wracking, if you can say that because there wasn't really anything on the line. I just wanted to leave in good shape. Once I got the start I did in the last moto then I thought it was only about me being able to stay up and I knew I would be fine. The track was OK but in the outside section it was super-rocky and needed some work.

Ricky Carmichael mentioned tracks should be simpler to encourage close racing...

RV: If you had asked him that when he was racing then he'd tell you 'no'. If you make it easy then anybody can do it. I'm sure some people would like us on an oval.

Were thinking about what you might spend the money on?

RV: No...I got enough money to spend on whatever I want right now! I'm gonna take it [the Monster Million] over twenty years so that in three years when I'm retired I won't be in the tax bracket I am now and I can collect the rest of it!



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STEWART SORTED...

By Steve Cox

James Stewart is going to be with Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha in 2012. It seems like a lateral move between teams but there was a lot that went down before he landed at JGR.

First off, L&M Racing – Stewart's former squad, which was co-owned by Larry Brooks and Mike Kranyak – were hopeful that Stewart would remain, along with his JS7 Entertainment company and Red Bull Energy Drinks, both of which Stewart brought to the team. However the former champ apparently did not want to stay on Yamahas in 2012.

This led to Stewart testing Suzukis, and just like Ryan Dungey, Chad Reed, Mike Alessi, and any other factory racer you can track down, Stewart loved the Suzuki RM-Z450. There were reportedly two problems with that: First, Yamaha allegedly has first right of refusal on Stewart's contract, and Yamaha knew that without Stewart, they would not have any big names in the USA. Yamaha was not willing to let Stewart out of his contract, which leads us to the second problem: Suzuki supposedly had no budget. Stewart would've had to buy himself out of his Yamaha deal, basically, and Suzuki had no money to do this, or to pay Stewart the kind of salary he would've wanted.

Stewart would've have had to make the buy out and then rely on win and championship bonuses alone to pay him in 2012. He could've made it work, but there were a lot of hurdles to jump.

At the same time that Stewart was attempting to put the puzzle pieces together for Suzuki, he was busy parting ways with his L&M team, which no longer has Larry Brooks as part owner. L&M is being reborn in 2012 with Mike Kranyak partnering with Jeff Ward and using Kawasakis. The team, for the most part, is as it was last year, though, with the same personnel and rumor has it that Josh Grant is going to be their primary rider. Stewart would not have wanted to return to Kawasaki, or vice versa, as they did not part in a good way in 2008.

Also at the same time, JGR was making multiple trips down to Stewart's house to let him ride their Yamaha YZ450F. Stewart reportedly liked the JGR bike and its set-up a lot more than the bike he rode at L&M, and he also liked the fact that buying himself out of his Yamaha contract and racing for no salary wasn't going to be an issue if he signed with L&M.

The puzzle pieces fell into place and Stewart will be racing for Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha in 2012 with at least one team-mate to be announced but it'll probably be Stewart's friend Kyle Chisholm and Stewart will be racing indoors and outdoors, apparently.

Silly season in the USA is still very, very silly, but with Stewart landed now, along with Dungey, things are starting to settle down. At least in the 450 class.



MotoGP

IVECO AUSTRALIAN GRAND PHILLIP ISLAND · OCTOBER 16th

MotoGP winner: Casey Stoner, Honda
Moto2 winner: Alex de Angelis, Motobi
125cc winner: Sandro Cortese, Aprilia

ALL OVER...

Photos by Monster Energy/Milagro
www.yamahamotogp.com
Honda Pro Images





Casey Stoner drifted through the reliably unreliable weather at his home Grand Prix to a hero's welcome and became only the second rider since 1989 to earn premier class world championships on different makes of machinery. That the birthday boy could fly unmolested to the chequered flag and defy the late rainfall was partially down to outgoing number one Jorge Lorenzo's absence after the Yamaha man ripped apart the tip of his left ring finger.

Stoner's record at Phillip Island is nothing short of incredible. The new champion has won for the last five years, taking pole position in the last four and has lead every single lap bar one of those victories. Quite simply the track is 'his'.

The run has equalled the feat of five successive wins notched by Valentino Rossi between 2001 and 2005 at...Phillip Island.

While Honda were able to toast their first win at the fantastic free-flowing race track in the 800cc era and grab their first MotoGP title since 2006 (Nicky Hayden on the last of the 990cc machines) there were other talking points in Australia.

Marco Simoncelli fatefully notched his best ever MotoGP finish with second place ahead of Yamaha-bound Andrea Dovizioso. Rossi crashed out for the second race in succession after losing the front end of the Ducati and only seven riders completed the actual full distance on the same lap as the winner.

While Sandro Cortese grabbed his second 125cc victory of the year all eyes were on Marc Marquez's extraordinary third place behind Alex De Angelis and Stefan Bradl after the impressive Spaniard made the podium for the eleventh time in 2011 from last place on the grid after a controversial run-in with Rattapark Wilairot during practice.



Rossi continues to fight his Ducati front-end nightmare. This was his first DNF at Phillip Island after an fantastic streak of 13 podiums in a total of 14 appearances





Jorge shows his good fingers. The 2010 number handed over his title with a ripped left ring finger after a bucking crash on the final corner of warm-up. With Ben Spies also out through a concussion, the Australian trip was a long and frustrating one for Yamaha



Beyond the sea...Simoncelli and Dovizioso wage a battle of Italy for second place which was won by the former...a week later and the MotoGP world would be turned upside down



Marquez dominated the 2010 125cc GP in Australia and produced a ride just as fine to keep in the Moto2 title hunt. The Spaniard had pegged back 82 points to Stefan Bradl to front the series going to Phillip Island. He was wreckless in practice but more than made up for his self-imposed handicap





The best...Casey Stoner was able to celebrate his second MotoGP title in ideal circumstances





BACKPAGE

Photo by Monster/Milagro





ON TRACK OFF ROAD



'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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